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ASSESSMENT OF MILITARY SITUATION IN INDOCHINA

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Introduction

This paper examines the enemy's options in Indochina for the balance of 1971 and for 1972. This assessment considers the impact of the following on the enemy's strategy options:

- The fall of Sihanouk and the loss of Sihanoukville.
- Lam Son.
- U.S. redeployments.
- ARVN capabilities.

The analytical framework encompasses:

- an assessment of the enemy's strategy options in terms of his logistics and manpower capabilities;
- the state of the "control war" or the strength of the GVN's position in the countryside and its effect on the enemy's strategy options;
- the state of the "main force war" as reflected in the relative strength of friendly to enemy main (battalion-size) forces in each Military Region in South Vietnam and the ability of friendly main forces to deter or cope with enemy main forces as U.S. redeployments continue.

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Separate assessments are provided for 1970, 1971, and 1972 because:

-- the war changed fundamentally between 1970 and 1971 with the loss of Sihanoukville as a source of supply. In 1970 the enemy's strategy (planned in 1969) was not seriously constrained by aggregate logistics considerations (although there may have been distribution problems). But in 1971 the enemy faced serious logistics problems. In 1972 it remains an issue whether the enemy will solve his logistics problems. Friendly air and ground interdiction efforts against the Ho Chi Minh Trail, including ARVN operations in South Laos, became more important in 1971 and will continue to play a key role in 1972.

-- by 1972 the level of U.S. forces will have dropped by 400,000 to 500,000 from its 1969 level, a change that will inevitably cause the enemy to consider new options,

-- 1972 is a Presidential election year in the U.S., possibly providing the enemy with a political incentive to consider more ambitious military activities than he undertook in 1969 or 1970.

The analysis herein draws heavily on and is generally consistent with two recent memoranda, CIA's "The Impact of Logistics Factors on NVA Offensive Capabilities During 1971" and CIA/DIA's "NVA/VC Military Activities During 1971-72." These assessments, based in part on analysis undertaken for NSSM 99, are supplemented herein by "control" [pacification] and main force (MR) analyses of the friendly situation derived from previous VSSG work.

1970: Fall of Sihanouk Facilitates Rapid GVN Control Progress and Precludes Enemy Challenge to Vietnamization

The military balance in Indochina shifted dramatically in the GVN's favor in 1970. Where at the outset of the year it appeared that the scheduled U.S. redeployments of 190,000 men under the Vietnamization program would probably permit the enemy to hold his own at a protracted war level of effort and possibly even provide him with the opportunity to test Vietnamization, the fall of Sihanouk and US-RVNAF cross-border operations into Cambodia so disadvantaged the

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the enemy (by diverting his forces from South Vietnam and constraining his logistic support) that he was unable to halt GVN progress in the countryside or mount a serious challenge to Vietnamization.

Enemy Strategy

In April 1969, COSVN 9 was issued, and it was fully played out in the enemy's unit deployments and activities by the beginning of 1970:

-- manpower infiltration in the 1969-70 dry season was only 57,000.

-- tonnage entering the Ho Chi Minh Trail was around 60,000 tons suggesting that the enemy planned a low-level of activity and took comfort in his still sizable Cambodian stockpiles refurbished through late 1969 by shipments through Sihanoukville.

The enemy apparently reasoned that a protracted war strategy would permit him to hold his position while U.S. forces redeployed.

Logistics - It is significant that 1970 enemy plans, not seriously constrained by logistics considerations (before Sihanoukville was closed), did not appear to envision more than a protracted war effort and perhaps selected tests of Vietnamization.

Manpower - An inescapable conclusion is that the enemy, after sending 250,000 forces down the Trail in 1967-68 and 102,000 in 1968-69, welcomed the respite he believed Vietnamization would allow him. (From 1965 to 1969 the pool of able-bodied men in North Vietnam dropped from 1.8 to 1.2 million, when, under normal circumstances, it should have risen by around 200,000. An infiltration level of 80,000 to 100,000 is roughly the amount that can be sustained without drawing down the manpower pool.) By infiltrating 57,000 in the 1969-70 dry season the enemy signalled this decision to opt for a protracted war strategy. His course seems to have been dictated by a desire to conserve manpower and prepare for a prolonged struggle.

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1970 Main Force and Control Situations

During 1970 the enemy's protracted war strategy failed to preserve the status quo despite U.S. redeployments. The fall of Sihanouk and a successful GVN pacification effort can be credited with keeping the GVN on top.

-- The GVN Maintained an Upper Hand in the Main Force War Despite the Redeployment of 190,000 U.S. Forces. One and possibly two enemy regiments were diverted from MR 1 to South Laos, three were diverted from MR 2 to South Laos and Cambodia, six from MR 3 to Cambodia, and two from MR 4 to Cambodia.

These diversions were required if the enemy was to expand his Trail capacity and defend the Trail against possible U.S. and RVNAF attacks. Overnight 40,000 FANK forces were added to the friendly forces opposing the enemy and this number quickly grew to over 150,000. To date, enemy diversions to Cambodia and South Laos still exceed ARVN diversion by at least 2:1. For example, in MR 3 only 43 of the 93 enemy battalions normally deployed in MR 3 before the fall of Sihanouk are now physically located there.

Thus, even with U.S. redeployments, the Main Force (friendly to enemy combat strength) Ratio (MFR) countrywide actually improved.

MFR ^{1/}

	<u>End of 1st Qtr. 1970</u>	<u>End of 1970</u>
MR 1	2.4:1	2.5:1
MR 2	3.3:1	2.9:1
MR 3	2.7:1	5.1:1
MR 4	<u>2.3:1</u>	<u>2.6:1</u>
Countrywide	2.7:1	3.1:1

1/ From Appendix B Table 2 of NSSM 99 RVNAF Force Variant paper. Dual threat is excluded from both observations.

In MR 3 in particular from which two U.S. divisions were redeployed in 1970, the large-scale enemy diversions just noted caused the MFR to increase. A slight improvement also took place in MR 4, whereas U.S. redeployments from MR 2 caused the MFR to decline. Because the bulk of U.S. forces remained in MR 1, friendly main force superiority was assured.

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-- GVN Control Progress Continued. Continued Free World dominance in the main force war and improved GVN territorial force performance, along with the marginally effective anti-Viet Cong infrastructure operations, brought about major GVN control gains in 1970:

	<u>Percent (%) Control (VSSG Indicator)</u>		
	<u>End-1969</u>	<u>End-1970</u>	<u>Change</u>
MR 1.	53	73	+20
MR 2	45	57	+12
MR 3	45	69	+24
MR 4	<u>48</u>	<u>69</u>	<u>+21</u>
Countrywide	48	67	+19

MRs 1, 3 and 4 all experienced major pacification gains. The link between friendly main force superiority and these gains is observed in the lagging results for MR 2, where the MFR declined in 1970. At the end of 1969 MR 2 ranked close to MRs 3 and 4, whereas at the end of 1970, pacification in MR 2 had fallen significantly behind that elsewhere in South Vietnam.

These military gains were supplemented on the political side by continued GVN political stability and on the economic side by the stabilization of the GVN economy after the October 1970 economic reforms.

1971: At the Outset of 1971 the Key Issue was Whether the Enemy Could Recover his Pre-Lon Nol Capabilities in Cambodia and South Laos and Return the War to South Vietnam. Could NVA Forces Rebuild and Protect their Logistics and Rear Base Capabilities in South Laos and Cambodia while Coping with FANK, ARVN Cross-Border Operations into Cambodia, Air Interdiction, and Lam Son?

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Enemy Strategy

In October 1970 we obtained from a high level rallier a detailed description of COSVN 20. According to this source in 1971 the enemy planned to give highest priority to:

-- political organization and military actions in Cambodia to "destroy" the Lon Nol government.

-- maintaining pressure on U.S. units in South Vietnam during the wet season in order to obtain high U.S. casualties and embarrass President Nixon at home. (This suggests attacks by fire and ground probes in MRs 1 and 2 where the bulk of U.S. forces are now stationed.)

-- attacks on ARVN forces in Central Vietnam with "intensified high points" where they have recently taken over from U.S. forces (e.g., the highlands) and where VC/NVA supply lines are short. Ground and artillery attacks were to be employed on population centers in MR 2 (and with a much lower priority in MR 4).

Manpower - Enemy manpower infiltration in the 1970-71 dry season has been about 75,000. This number is below the NSSM 99 estimate of 100,000 as being necessary to sustain a protracted war in 1971, and (assuming there are no further large inflows this dry season) would imply the enemy intended in 1971 to again limit his activities in South Vietnam to a protracted war level. This could, of course, still encompass high points in MRs 3 and 4, limited ground attacks in Cambodia, stand-off attacks and limited ground probes in MR 1, and multi-battalion ground attacks on a small number of targets in the highlands of Central Vietnam (including the southern portion of MR 1).

The impact of Lam Son on this strategy is not yet clear. Lam Son appears to have cost the enemy at least 10,000 KIA. We also know that regiments destined for Cambodia and the central highlands were held up in South Laos to cope with ARVN forces. Most importantly, Lam Son made credible the threat to South Laos (ARVN operations in Cambodia had a similar affect there) and increased the prospects that enemy units now diverted there will not be deployed into South

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Vietnam in 1971. Because the enemy is now required to continue a full-scale logistics effort up to the end of the dry season (late May), his combat forces (about 20,000) in South Laos cannot be diverted from protecting the Trail until the wet season is underway.

Logistics - The enemy clearly made every effort to get his logistics effort off to an early start in the 1970-71 dry season. Probably for the first time in the current Indo-China War, the enemy's strategy options in South Vietnam and Cambodia were logistically constrained. Delayed by a late monsoon he still had input some 41,000 tons by early March. The impact of Lam Son on his logistics situation was clearly significant.

-- CIA's Logistics Assessment of Lam Son. In the 1970-71 dry season, Hanoi had to fulfill major "additional" logistics requirements in addition to the "normal" logistics requirements met by inflows onto the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

The normal requirement was that met to sustain a protracted war in 1969-70 using the Trail (before the fall of Sihanouk). It consisted of inflows to support forces in southern Laos and northern South Vietnam. CIA estimates the inflow tonnage to meet this normal requirement to be 54,000 tons. Actual inflows in 1969-70 were 60,000 tons. (Sihanoukville was the source of supply for southern South Vietnam.)

The additional requirements for the 1970-71 dry season are itemized below:

-- (1) to replace Sihanoukville	5,520-8,160
-- (2) to support non-combat consumption for <u>increased</u> force in South Laos	7,900
-- (3) Lam Son Caches Destroyed or Captured	3,650
-- (4) Combat Consumption to Cope with Lam Son	3,070
TOTAL	20,140-22,780
	tons

Adding the normal (54,000) to the additional requirements for the 1970-71 dry season gives a total inflow requirement this dry season of 74,140-76,780 tons.

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The capacity of the Trail has been estimated by CIA to be between 71,000 tons and 89,000 tons (the mid-point estimate 80,000) on the assumption that the Trail is kept open through May 1971 or to the end of the dry season.

Noting that the requirement exceeds the minimum estimate of capacity but falls short of the maximum estimate CIA concludes:

"... throughout will be adequate for the Communists to sustain military activity at the low levels observed during 1970

"[It] will not permit the Communists to build up any significant volume of stockpiles and will make it imperative that their next logistic offensive get off to an extremely early start next dry season.

"In sum, North Vietnam's logistic position over the past year has become greatly complicated. Far from enjoying a wide range of logistic options to support alternative strategies, Hanoi appears tied, for 1971 at least, to a continuation of the low-profile war fought in 1970. While the enemy's logistic situation does not preclude an occasional high point of combat activity in either South Vietnam or Cambodia, major sustained warfare seems definitely to be ruled out."

DIA concurs in these conclusions.

-- Possible Adjustments in CIA's Estimate. Several assumptions underlying the foregoing analysis can be viewed as placing the resulting outcome estimate at the conservative end of a spectrum of outcome estimates. These are.

-- The analysis of the additional requirement to support the non-combat consumption for the enlarged force in South Laos (item 2 in the above table) is based on a 10,000 addition to the pre-Lon Nol force in South Laos. However, CIA Memorandum 71-32 dated

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February, 1971 states: "During 1970 the NVA bolstered its force structure in southern Laos by 20,000 men concentrated heavily in the Tchepone area." If the additional requirement to support 10,000 more men than the CIA assumed is included, the inflow requirement for 1970-71 would increase by another 7,900 tons.

-- CIA assumes a 25% bomb damage assessment (BDA) on tonnage moving on the Trail for both 1969-70 and 1970-71. It is possible to argue that increased truck kills attributable to the increased gunship effort in 1970-71 justify adding a requirement to the normal estimate based on the 1969-70 experience. Truck kills thus far this year are estimated at about 8,000 versus 4,300 a year ago. If we assume half of this increase of 3,700 trucks were loaded and that half of the four ton load on the loaded trucks is lost, another 3,700 tons would be added to the 1970-71 inflow requirement.

-- CIA does not add any BDA for the Lam Son operations. There are no firm data on BDA linked to Lam Son despite pilot reports that large supply depots were destroyed. Another 2,000 tons might be added as an additional requirement to cover such a possibility.

-- CIA assumes the North Vietnamese are able to keep the Trail open through the end of May and sustain a high rate of logistics activity to that date. If, on the other hand, it is assumed this maximum effort is not achieved, but rather the Trail effort falls short of this maximum goal by the equivalent of 15 days at an average 280 tons per day input rate, CIA's Trail capacity estimate would fall by 4,200 tons.

If these adjustments are made, one obtains the following results:

	<u>CIA</u>	<u>Adjusted</u>
Total Additional Requirements	20,140-22,780	33,740-36,380

Whereas the CIA total requirement of 74,140-76,780 tons was compared with CIA's mid-point capacity estimate of 80,000, the "adjusted" total requirement of 87,740-90,380 would compare with an adjusted mid-point Trail input capacity estimate of 75,800 tons (80,000 tons minus 4,200).

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Therefore, the adjusted calculations would be consistent with the view that the enemy will fall short of his protracted war logistics requirement in 1970-71, whereas the CIA estimate suggests that if the enemy strains to his maximum capacity, his Trail effort will support a protracted war activity level.

Assuming these two estimates, one conservative one generous, bound the possible outcomes, the impact of Lam Son in combination with the loss of Sihanoukville can be summarized as follows:

-- precluded sustained dry season ground attacks in Cambodia by insuring that supply through-put would not reach units there until the wet season when floods will seriously hamper offensive activities. (Enemy units in MRs 3 and 4 were similarly constrained by Lam Son but they were already too weak in manpower terms to mount major attacks.)

-- limited the scope of 1971 enemy offensive activities in southern MR 1 and MR 2's highlands by denying the enemy the opportunity to establish forward-based stocks in the highlands and bordering Laos areas. (This does not preclude probable multi-regiment attacks in the highlands but it should limit their scope and duration.)

-- strained enemy protracted war activities in other areas, i. e., MRs 3 and 4, and the coastal areas of MR 2. Because a maximum dry season logistics effort will likely just meet aggregate protracted war logistic requirements, it is probable that local shortages will be encountered that will inhibit protracted war activity in other selected areas. Already in MR 3, for example, standard loads for enemy weapons have been limited and we have a report from Cambodia that the enemy is trying to buy AK-47 rounds on the local economy.

-- narrowed the enemy's 1972 options. Because it takes several months of the dry season to attain a sizeable logistics through-put rate to Cambodia and South Vietnam, the failure of the enemy to build up large stockpiles in 1971 will mean that it will be late in the 1971-72 dry season -- e. g. late February or early March -- before he can attain the logistics capabilities to launch a major offensive. This assumes, of course, the enemy can successfully solve the logistics problems in 1972 he was unable to solve in 1971.

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If the enemy intended to mount a major offensive in early 1972 a key Lam Son benefit is that it may have reduced the enemy's flexibility in 1972.

The Main Force and Control Prospects for 1971

-- Main Force Prospects for 1971. GVN main force superiority in MRs 3 and 4 seems assured for the rest of 1971. This is due primarily to: (1) probable continued NVA diversions from these areas to Cambodia, (2) the fact that U.S. redeployments will have little effect on the MFR in these areas since there are no U.S. ground forces in MR 4 and only a brigade in MR 3, and (3) aggressive ARVN operations against enemy base areas in MR 4.

In MRs 1 and 2, however, the main force balance could be upset by continued U.S. redeployments, although given the enemy capabilities for the balance of the dry season reviewed above, it seems probable that the challenge will come in 1972 rather than in 1971. In any case a final assessment would depend on information on projected U.S. redeployments for the balance of 1971.

-- Control Assessment for 1971. If the GVN could achieve the control gains in 1971 on the scale of the 19 percent achieved in 1970, the enemy's main force options in 1972 in MRs 3 and 4 would be all but eliminated. On the other hand, control prospects in MRs 1 and 2 are less encouraging.

January 1971 control data for selected provinces in MRs 3 and 4 show why the outlook in these areas is encouraging:

<u>MR 3</u>		<u>MR 4</u>	
Binh Duong	72%	Dinh Tuong	69%
Tay Ninh	75	Kien Hoa	50
Long An	77	Chuong Thien	48
Hau Nghia	34		
<u>All MR 3 Provinces</u>		<u>All MR 4 Provinces</u>	69%

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A year ago control in Dinh Tuong was about 35 percent and in Kien Hoa 25 percent. These VC strongholds are now being penetrated by aggressive GVN operations. When control reaches about 75 percent in a province the enemy's only main force option is a costly conventional-style attack. The NSSM 99 most probable estimate that a division could be freed from MR 4 in 1972 may be exceeded if the GVN holds off the enemy's current determined dry season attacks and pacifies the An Xuyen and Kien Hoa base areas by the end of the year.

MR 3 is also encouraging, although Hau Nghia is a critical and lagging province. Given the "dual" enemy threat to Cambodia and MR 3 (now occupied by ARVN in Cambodia), the possible redeployment of the last U.S. brigade from MR 3 in the near future, and the key main force defense requirement for Saigon, no main force units are likely to be freed from MR 3 in 1971 or 1972.

MR 2 presents a serious problem. The low GVN control scores for the key GVN MR 2 provinces listed below show that the control war has not favored the GVN in MR 2 as much as it has elsewhere in South Vietnam.

January, 1971

Binh Dinh	43%
Pleiku	43
Phu Yen	48
Binh Thuan	63
All MR 2 provinces	57%

A U.S. brigade still operates in northern Binh Dinh and two ROK Divisions along the coast. Assuming the U.S. brigade redeploys and the ROK forces stay in 1971, the best hope is for moderate control gains that will not alter the requirement for GVN forces or deny the enemy main force options in 1972. A most probable estimate, if one accounts for the likely enemy highlands offensive this year, is a continued control stalemate in 1971.

The best GVN control performance in 1970 took place in MR 1. Particularly noteworthy were the gains in Quang Tin which gives the GVN a strong control position in three of MR 1's five provinces:

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January, 1971

Quang Tri	76%
Thua Thien	86
Quang Nam	58
Quang Tin	81
Quang Ngai	66
All MR 1 provinces	73%

While a slight control loss was probably experienced in February (the data are not yet available), a determinant of whether 1971 will see further progress is the pace of the redeployment of the three U.S. divisions now in MR 1.

(The foregoing control assessment assumes the political situation in South Vietnam through the 1971 Presidential elections remains roughly as it is currently -- although pre-occupation with the elections will divert some GVN attention away from pacification -- and that no ceasefire is agreed to in 1971.)

1972: A Probable Major Enemy Offensive in Northern South Vietnam or Cambodia

Enemy Strategy

There is no captured document or other basis for estimating Hanoi's strategy intentions for 1972. This assessment relies on an analysis of enemy capabilities to obtain an understanding of the range of options open to the enemy and the best, most, and worst probable courses of enemy action.

For analytical purposes a base case strategy of protracted war and four higher strategies ranging from an offensive in MR 1 to a country-wide offensive were assessed in terms of the enemy's manpower and logistics capabilities to carry them out:

- Base Case Strategy: Protracted War - Hanoi attempts to continue level of activity of last 18 months
- Variant 1: Major Offensive in MR 1
- Variant 2: Major Offensive in Cambodia
- Variant 3: Major Offensives in GVN MR 1 and Cambodia
- Variant 4: Major Offensive in Cambodia and in each MR of South Vietnam.

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Logistics - CIA's logistics analysis assumed:

-- continued air interdiction at 1970-71 dry season levels.

-- in 1972 the enemy maintains 80,000 forces in South Laos, the same size force deployed at the outset of the 1970-71 dry season.

It may be questionable whether a Lam Son-type threat will be credible against South Laos a year from now. Therefore a variant to the CIA estimate is provided herein to cover the possibility that the enemy can decrease his force in South Laos by 10,000 from 80,000 to 70,000 next year. Such an adjustment to CIA's analysis would decrease next year's logistic requirement by 7,900 tons.

The results of the CIA and adjusted estimates are summarized below:

Logistics Input Requirements for 1972 Strategy
Options Assuming no Lam Son in 1972

	<u>CIA Estimate</u>	<u>Adjusted Estimate</u>
Protracted War	66,600	56,100
MR 1 Offensive	72,937-77,325	65,037-69,425
Cambodia Offensive	70,350-72,150	62,450-64,250
MR 1 and Cambodia Offensive	76,987-83,175	69,087-75,275
Countrywide Offensive	79,687-87,450	71,787-79,550

If one assumes there is a Lam Son-type operation in 1972 or one with similar logistics implications for the enemy, the CIA logistics requirements estimates can be adjusted as follows:

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-- the CIA estimate that 80,000 forces will be deployed in South Laos becomes realistic if one assumes another Lam Son. Thus the "adjusted estimate" is no longer necessary because it is based on a 70,000 rather than 80,000 South Laos force.

-- direct logistics losses to Lam Son of 3,650 for caches destroyed or captured and 3,070 for combat consumption should be added to the CIA's "no-Lam Son" estimate for 1972.

CIA's 1972 estimates adjusted for a possible Lam Son-type operation in 1972 are shown below (6,720 tons are added to CIA's basic estimate):

Protracted War	73,320
MR 1 Offensive	79,657-84,045
Cambodia Offensive	77,070-78,870
MR 1 and Cambodia Offensive	83,707-89,895
Countrywide Offensive	86,407-94,170

When the mid-points of the CIA, Adjusted, and Lam Son estimates are compared with the mid-point estimate of CIA's capacity assessment for the Trail in 1972, the logistics implications of the various strategies are shown below:

	<u>Without Lam Son '72</u>		<u>With Lam Son '72</u>	<u>Capacity</u>
	<u>CIA est.</u>	<u>Adjusted</u>		<u>(mid-point)</u>
Protracted War	66,600	56,000	73,000	80,000
MR 1 Offensive	75,000	67,000	82,000	80,000
Cambodia Offensive	71,000	63,000	78,000	80,000
MR 1 and Cambodia Offensive	80,000	72,000	86,000	80,000
Countrywide Offen- sive	84,500	75,500	90,000	80,000

On logistics grounds alone it appears that without a Lam Son 1972 or its equivalent, all enemy strategy options ranging from protracted war to a combined MR 1 and Cambodian offensive are feasible. Only a countrywide offensive is logistically infeasible.

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-- using the mid-point of CIA's capacity estimate, a protracted war, an MR 1 offensive, and a Cambodia offensive would appear feasible. Both a combined Cambodia and MR 1 offensive and a countrywide offensive would appear infeasible.

-- if the upper end of CIA's capacity estimate is used (89,000) all strategies except a countrywide offensive would appear to be feasible.

Manpower - Manpower remains the primary constraint on the enemy's strategy choices. The manpower requirements for the alternative enemy strategies are shown in the following table.

	<u>Infiltration Requirements</u>	
	<u>CIA</u>	<u>CIA - 25,000</u>
Protracted War	100,000	75,000
MR 1 Offensive	130,000	105,000
Cambodia Offensive	150,000	125,000
MR 1 and Cambodia Offensive	180,000	155,000
Countrywide Offensive	250,000-300,000	175,000-225,000

An estimate 25,000 below CIA's is provided for each strategy. This adjustment is intended as a crude approximation (in the absence of detailed analysis) of a possible decline in enemy losses from the 200,000 CIA assumed for 1972. Such a decline could result from the redeployment of U.S. forces.

Infiltration above 100,000 would draw down the enemy's manpower pool. But as noted earlier, in 1968 the enemy sent 244,000 south and in 1969, 105,000. Clearly the enemy has the capacity with a 1.3-1.4 million man able-bodied manpower pool to repeat his 1968 performance. While our knowledge of the military and economic strains on North Vietnam is limited, there is some evidence, including the low 1969 and 1970 levels of infiltration, that the enemy will be reluctant to pay too high a price in 1972.

Prudent military planning might, however, count on infiltration in the 100,000 to 160,000 range in 1972. Such an allowance would place all enemy military strategies except a combined MR 1 and Cambodia offensive and a countrywide offensive within enemy manpower capabilities using CIA's estimates. According to DIA's estimates all strategies except a countrywide offensive would be feasible.

Best, Most, and Worst Probable Strategy Estimate for 1972

The foregoing logistics and manpower analysis does not provide a final basis for assessing probable enemy strategies. The enemy must weigh carefully the costs of a particular strategy against the probability of military and/or political success. In our selection of strategies we have already excluded improbable alternatives such as an MR 3 offensive. The high alternative of a country-wide offensive can also be excluded as improbable.

Other Factors Bearing on Enemy Strategy Choice - The local logistics situation will affect the enemy's choice. If he opts for a major offensive in 1972, the short supply lines in MRs 1 and 2 might favor that area in comparison with Cambodia.

The monsoon might also influence his choice. A major offensive in Cambodia and all of South Vietnam south of northern MR 1 would almost certainly be launched before mid-May 1972 at the latest. Yet logistics considerations may make it difficult to get supplies in place in Cambodia and MRs 3 and 4 of South Vietnam in time to launch a major ground offensive before the wet season.

The northern MR 1 area is subject to the northeast monsoon which puts the dry season for this area in the May to September period. The enemy might find this area attractive not only for its short LOC's but also because the dry season is close to the time of the 1972 U.S. Presidential elections.

Control is an important determinant of the area and nature of probable enemy activities. High GVN control in MRs 3 and 4 greatly inhibit the local manpower and logistics support the enemy can count on. NVA units in most of MRs 3 and 4 and Quang Tri and Thua Thien of MR 1 must fight like a conventional army with a logistics tail. On the other hand the enemy's most advantageous control situation is in MR 2, a circumstance that suggests an attack either in the Central Highlands or in Binh Dinh and Phu Yen. (This option was inadvertently overlooked as an enemy strategy option and should be added to the foregoing analysis.)

The areas from which U.S. troops redeploy and their rate of redeployment ^{could} bear on the kind of offensive Hanoi may mount. The following table compares the end 1970 MFR with mid-1972 MFR's based respectively on a 150,000 and 50,000 residual force level.

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Main Force Ratio (MFR) Comparisons^{1/}
Assuming Late 1970 Threat

	<u>End 1970</u>	<u>Mid-72 Assuming 150,000 U.S. Force Level</u>	<u>Mid-72 Assuming 50,000 US Force Level</u>
MR 1	2.5	1.8 ²	1.2 ¹
MR 2	2.9	2.5	2.3 ¹
MR 3	5.1	3.2	3.2
MR 4	2.6	2.6	2.6
Countrywide	3.1	2.5	1.8

¹ Preliminary calculations derived from Appendix B to NSSM 99 RVNAF Ground Force Variants paper and excluding dual threat forces.

² Assumes all ROK Units remain in MR 2 but ROK Marine Brigade is redeployed from MR 1.

One way to look at the prospects in the MRs assuming a 150,000 (Fiscal Guidance) force level in mid-1972, is to recognize that RVNAF main forces in MR 2 with the same 2.5 to 1 MFR advantage as MR 1's forces at the end of 1970, must cope with an enemy in MR 2 with only 55 percent GVN control whereas in MR 1 at the end of 1970 the GVN had 73 percent control. In the past in MR 2, whenever the MFR fell below 3.0 for several months the GVN lost control.

In MR 1 the situation could also be serious. Friendly main force combat strength relative to enemy combat strength will drop 25 percent if in mid-1972 U.S. force levels in Vietnam are 150,000 and by 50 percent if the U.S. force level drops to 50,000. We have no way of gauging from past experience what MFR is required to maintain a main force stalemate in MR 1. We do know that in the second and third quarters of 1970 the MFR fell to 1.8 and 1.9 respectively when the enemy built up his forces, yet the GVN continued to register control gains. We also must consider that the enemy can easily and quickly increase the threat to MR 1.

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Our analysis should encompass best, most, and worst probable outcomes. Illustrative choices for these categories and the reasons for their possible inclusion are:

-- Best Probable: Continued Protracted War with Limited Ground Attacks in MR 2 Highlands. This alternative could be justified on the following grounds: (a) FANK does well, (b) logistics problems preclude preparation for a major offensive in Cambodia or MR 3 and 4 in 1972, (c) a residual 1972 U.S. force of one division remains in northern MR 1 through late 1972 and in combination with ARVN and U.S. air support deters an attack on MR 1 or ARVN units in MR 1 are greatly expanded by at least a division equivalent while U.S. ground combat forces are withdrawn, and (d) the control situation in MR 2 persuades the enemy that his greatest opportunity for low cost high visibility gains is in MR 2.

-- Most Probable: Sustained Ground Attacks in MR 1 and MR 2 Highlands with Protracted War in Cambodia and MRs 3 and 4. This alternative could be the enemy's choice because: (a) high GVN control levels and main force superiority in MRs 3 and 4 make enemy attacks too costly, (b) FANK holds its own in Cambodia with the current level of ARVN support or FANK loses ground but ARVN capabilities are still adequate to fill the gap without jeopardizing GVN control in MRs 3 and 4, (c) logistics problems on the Trail preclude adequate logistics support for sustained ground attacks south of northern MR 2, (d) short LOC's encourage enemy attacks in MRs 1 and 2, (e) poor GVN control and intact VCI and local forces in Binh Dinh, Quang Nam and Quang Nhai, provide enemy with possible low cost high effectiveness gains, (f) rapid enemy reinforcement capability from North Vietnam makes MR 1 attack attractive.

-- Worst Probable: Cambodia, MR 2 Highlands, and MR 1 Offensive. The enemy chooses to make a maximum effort to defeat Vietnamization in 1972. He attacks in Cambodia and MRs 1 and 2 because of FANK's vulnerability, and short LOC's in MR 1 and MR 2's highlands.

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MR Outcome Against Most Probable Threat

We projected a most probable case friendly main force requirement against the most probable enemy strategy -- a major enemy offensive (with a one division reinforcement) in MR 1 and a three-regiment augmentation for highlands offensive in MR 2. We assume U.S. redeployments are in accordance with current Fiscal Guidance, i.e. 150,000 in mid-CY 1972. The following table shows the projected friendly main force surpluses and deficits necessary to maintain a main force stalemate in each MR and countrywide at the time of such an offensive. March, April, or May 1972 would be the probable period for such attacks given the enemy's logistics problems.

Battalion Surpluses (+) and Deficits (-)

MR 1	-15
MR 2	-11
MR 3	+ 5
MR 4	+13
Countrywide	- 8

Possible Friendly Adjustments to Cope with Enemy Strategies in 1972

The foregoing analysis suggests several issues that might be addressed in order to lessen the probability that the enemy can successfully carry out the strategy alternatives postulated above.

-- Whether or not FANK increases its capabilities relative to Communist forces in Cambodia, thereby freeing ARVN units from permanent cross-border operations in Cambodia (12-14 battalions) or causing the enemy to put in more troops to hold his own. We presently know very little about FANK performance and growth potential.

-- The effectiveness of the combined air interdiction program in South Laos in 1971-72. This depends not only on sortie rates but on the mix between fast-movers and slow movers and gunships. An assessment of alternative sortie level and mix packages for the 1971-72 dry season would clarify the alternatives in this area.

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-- The effectiveness of the ground interdiction program in South Laos in 1971-72. The large scale enemy deployments in South Laos, including roughly 20,000 NVA combat forces in addition to 45,000 NVA logistics and 5,000 anti-aircraft forces raise a basic interdiction issue: the relative effectiveness of ground versus air interdiction. By comparing the annual cost of a 10 percent reduction in air sorties and support with its equivalent in [] the cost side of this trade-off can be illustrated:

1. 10 percent air sortie and support reductions - \$132 million

25X1



25X1

The possibility of increased ground interdiction in South Laos in 1972 to obtain the force diversion and logistics benefits obtained from Lam Son [] will have an important bearing on the enemy's 1972 options.

In the case of additional deployments [] a country mobilized at a very small proportion of its manpower capacity, the financial costs of additional deployments, a possible diminution in the country-insurgency effort, or political opposition from within [] are the principal constraints on additional deployments.

25X1

25X1

For Vietnam at issue is the fundamental trade-off between the benefits 25X1 to pacification of leaving main forces within South Vietnam versus the gains from operations against South Laos. Alternatively, if one considers expanding RVNAF to give it an additional capability to operate in South Laos, the manpower and economic feasibility of such an expansion would have to be weighed (see separate RVNAF section below).

-- Whether or not the GVN achieves decisive control results in the MRs in 1971. If the GVN achieves decisive control gains in MRs 3 and 4 in 1971, the enemy's main force options will be all but eliminated in these areas, except for costly conventional-style attacks. Similar (but not expected) control results in MR 2 and MR 1 would likewise force the enemy to fight as a conventional army. From the point of view of the support his main forces can obtain from local forces, the enemy would prefer to mount a 1972 main force attack in northern MR 2 and southern MR 1.

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-- Whether ROK forces stay in South Vietnam - the MR-2 main force balance and the control situation over the next year will be significantly affected by the possible ROK redeployments. The performance of ROK forces has fallen well below their capabilities and it is costly to the U.S. to retain them in South Vietnam. On the other hand the FY 72 cost of retaining the current 2 1/3 division ROK force in South Vietnam compares favorably with the cost of adding two ARVN divisions.

		(\$ million) FY 73-75 <u>Annual Average</u>
	<u>FY 1972</u>	
U.S. Direct Costs in Support of ROK Forces (2 1/3 divisions) <u>1/</u>	245	245
MASF and GVN Budget Costs of Two Additional ARVN Divisions	348 <u>2/</u>	263

1/ Does not include quid pro quo MAP or AID funds provided directly to Korea which, in any case, are now "sunk costs."

2/ Includes investment costs of \$72 million.

Given the possible infeasibility of adding two ARVN divisions in 1972, or if they can be added given: (a) that their likely combat capabilities would be less than that of ROK forces and (b) the desirability of using them in MR 1 and as a reserve force for MR 2, the continued presence of ROK forces might be desirable on cost-effectiveness grounds.

Of course, efforts should be undertaken to enhance the ROK contribution by deploying ROK forces away from the population where they operate more effectively.

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RVNAF FORCE VARIANTS

Reviewed briefly below and described in more detail in the appendices to this paper are possible measures that might be taken to strengthen RVNAF.

Add Two Divisions to RVNAF

The following table summarizes the force structure and costs of the currently programmed RVNAF force of 1.1 million and an expanded force of 1.2 million.

RVNAF Force Structures

	1,100, 000	1,200,000		
	<u>Programmed</u>	<u>Force</u>		<u>Changes</u>
<u>Units</u>				
Divisions	12	14	+	2
Infantry BNS	133	157	+	24
Armored Car Sqdns	17	18	+	1
Fld Arty BNS (105)	40	46	+	6
Fld Arty BNS (155)	15	17	+	2
RF Companies	1,679	1,872	+	200
RF Platoons	7,479	7,479		0
<u>Personnel</u>				
ARVN	477,456	514,988	+	37,530
VNN	39,611	43,251	+	3,640
RF/PF	552,473	582,561	+	30,088
TOTAL	1,100,000	1,201,260		+101,260
<u>1/</u>	<u>2/</u>			
Costs	\$3.4 billion	\$3.6 billion		+\$205 million

1/ FY 72 GVN Budget (Approximately \$1.3B) is divided by DOD Approved FY 72 RVNAF Manpower (1,100,000) to yield an incremental planning factor of approximately \$1200 per man. \$1200 x 100,000 equals \$120 million per year plus or minus to the DOD Approved Base Case.

2/ Cost estimating relationships developed by the US Army Field Cost Agency based upon data gathered in Vietnam in Nov-Dec 1969 indicate that the "Programmed" cost shown above of \$3400M may be reduced by \$200M.

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The force mix described in the above table is illustrative. A key consideration in deciding the final mix if a decision were made to expand RVNAF is the relative cost of the various type forces. The following table shows these costs on a per division strength basis. That is the cost of a 12,700 man division is compared with the costs of the size of RF and PF forces that could be manned with the same number of personnel.

Costs (Millions)				
	<u>Strength</u>	<u>Initial Investment</u>	<u>Annual Recurring</u>	<u>Total</u>
1 ARVN Division	12,700	39.5	45.8	85.3
397 PF PLT @ 32 men	12,704	12.7	11.5	24.2
103 RF Cos @ 123 men	12,669	14.9	17.2	32.1

Before the selection of any option that expands RVNAF beyond the currently planned 1,100,000 man force, the serious issue of whether such forces could be manned should be addressed. The following table, developed by CINCPAC on the basis of admittedly poor RVN census data is the best current estimate of manpower requirements and resources.

As can be noted in the preceding table, the currently available manpower estimate shows a surplus of (a) 57,000 to (b) 137,503 to meet unprogrammed military requirements in FY 72 depending on whether the economic requirement is met from (a) internal or (b) additional external resources.

It is doubtful that a decline in casualties can be forecast in any situation which would require an increase in the size of RVNAF. However, there are programs to facilitate identification and return of deserters to duty which may reduce desertions over time below the figure assumed for 1972. In any event, the majority of the deserters not returned to duty may actually be injections into the economy since few go over to the enemy. A more important consideration is that, as GVN control of its

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	Current Strength as of <u>30 Nov 70</u>	<u>FY 71</u>	<u>FY 72</u>
a. Authorized Military Requirement			
RVNAF (includes RF & PF)	1,042,676	1,078,345	1,092,087
Paramilitary (less PSDF)	152,646	165,285	163,285
SUBTOTAL:	<u>1,195,322</u>	<u>1,243,630</u>	<u>1,255,372</u>
b. Estimated Requirement to Sustain Authorized Force			
RVNAF Casualties (Not returned to duty)		33,000	33,500
RVNAF Desertions (Not Returned to Duty)		86,500	62,800
RVNAF Discharges (Less Physical Discharges)		8,900	9,000
National Police Casualties (Not Returned to Duty)		680	690
National Police Desertions (Not Returned to Duty)		1,130	570
National Police (Dismissed, Resigned, Retired)		2,000	2,040
SUBTOTAL:		<u>132,210</u>	<u>108,600</u>
c. Estimated Sources of Manpower			
Incoming 18 yrs age group	194,000		199,000
Hoi Chanh	50,000		55,000
Deserters	77,850		56,520
SUBTOTAL:	<u>321,850</u>		<u>310,520</u>
d. Total Estimated Requirements to Sustain Force			
Minimal Increase in Economy/Employment	132,210		108,600
Force Increase	80,000		80,000
SUBTOTAL:	<u>212,210</u>		<u>188,600</u>

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e. Surplus Available to Meet Unprogrammed Military and Economic Requirements: (a)			+61,332	+120,178
-- Excluding Economic Requirement:¹ (b)			+141,322	+200,178
f. Surplus Available to Meet Unprogrammed Military Requirements: (a)			+ 24,173	+ 57,503
-- Excluding Economic Requirement:¹ (b)			+104,173	+137,503

¹ The economic requirement could be met by increasing the level of U.S. Imports in support of the GVN economy above the current \$750 million level.

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population has increased over the past several years, the manpower available to GVN has also increased and each periodic estimate by U.S. Agencies of the maximum total supportable force has proven to be conservative. Moreover, RVNAF recruitment in 1970 was measurably more successful than in earlier years. The possibility of an increase in GVN force levels cannot be ruled out solely on the basis of manpower requirements versus manpower resources.

A second important factor is the likelihood that some of the available manpower will be needed for increases in civilian employment related to economic development. If the United States absorbs the cost and if economic development is deferred, these personnel could be diverted to the Armed forces. It is reasonable to expect that, under appropriate circumstances, further increases in GVN force strengths could be achieved and supported.

Another factor which impacts on changes in the RVNAF is that any increase in force levels is highly time sensitive. Lead time in developing effective members of the RVNAF may vary from as little as three months in the case of replacements to two years as in the case of fielding a major unit. This includes the time for procurement, induction of personnel, individual and advanced training, and specialist and unit training. An interrelated factor is the equipment variable. Once the type unit and its activation schedule is determined, the procurement of equipment may be the critical issue involved. Whether the equipment is available in-country, available from U.S. stocks, or requires production and delivery to the RVN will determine the time required for unit organization and readiness. Decisions, therefore, to increase the RVNAF in a major degree must take into account the time required to provide the properly trained personnel with the necessary equipment and to train further the unit before it can be considered effectively a part of the overall force structure.

Variants That Reallocate Forces Within the Currently Planned Force Level

Three variants were examined which reallocate RVNAF manpower within the currently planned FY 72 force ceiling of 1,100,000 men. These variants could be implemented singularly or in combination.

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-- (1) RVNAF forces in MRs I and II could be strengthened by RVNAF zeroing out units in MRs III and IV and activating them in the former MRs. Possibilities for such an action would be deactivating RF/PF units in areas in which the PSDF are firmly in control and/or reducing ARVN regiments in MRs III and IV from four to three battalion units.

The GVN is currently planning changes in RVNAF force structure along these lines. Proposals under consideration provide for eliminating the 4th battalion in each ARVN regiment and adding the deactivated battalion's rifle companies to the remaining battalions in the regiment (providing four rifle companies per battalion vice the current three rifle companies per battalion). In addition, GVN proposes to reduce the strength of each PF platoon from 35 to 32 men. These space savings will be used to add one Armed Cavalry Regiment, 10 Military Police Companies, 17 RF battalion headquarters, and 219 PF platoons to their force structure. Other variants could be considered.

-- (2) The present 1st ARVN Division could be modified to form a two-division force to provide security in northern MR I. Logistic support would then continue to be provided by the existing MR I Corps System. Two ARVN divisions would be formed by reducing the 1st Division to standard configuration and using the excess plus additional resources to form a new division. Assets available in the 1st ARVN Division, additional resources required, and the proposed reorganization are shown below:

PROPOSED REORGANIZATION

1st ARVN Division

Old Regt
Old Regt
New Regt

9 Old Bns
3 New Bn Hqs

1 A/C Sqdn

1 Engr Bn

3 105 How Bn

1 155 How Bn

New ARVN Division

Old Regt
Old Regt
New Regt

8 Old Bns
4 New Bn Hqs

1 A/C Sqdn

1 Engr Bn

3 105 How Bn

1 155 How Bn

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COST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

TYPE STRUCTURE	INVESTMENT	ANNUAL RECURRING
1 Division Base (-90 spaces)	\$12.2M	\$6.2
2 Regimental Bases	2.0	1.4
7 Infantry Battalion Headquarters	.7	.7
23 Infantry Companies	9.6	10.2
1 105 How Battalion	2.6	6.4
2 155 How Batteries	2.0	2.5
1 155 How Bn Hq	.5	.5
TOTAL COSTS	\$29.6M	\$27.9M
	TOTAL	\$57.5M

-- (3) Another possibility to strengthen ARVN force posture would be to combine forces in Pleiku and Kontum Provinces into a force tailored along the lines of an ARVN division. The proposed force structure would be developed to include those assets in terms of maneuver battalions, staff organization/manning and combat and combat service support elements that would enable it to function independently in sustained combat with NVA forces. As a minimum, it would be organized with two infantry regiments and would possess a division base (standard ARVN configuration) capable of accepting and sustaining under its OPCON the equivalent of a third infantry regiment. Logistic support would continue to be provided by the existing MR II Corps system. The necessary staff, combat and combat service support augmentation could be realized essentially from MR II Corps nondivisional assets. The proposed reorganization and additional resources required are shown below:

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PROPOSED REORGANIZATION

Headquarters, (ARVN Div equivalent)

42d Infantry Regiment } or other numbered regiments as desired
 47th Infantry Regiment }
 Third Infantry Regiment (or equivalent) upon augmentation

ARVN Division combat and combat support elements to include:

2 - Direct Support (DS) Artillery Battalions

(Third DS Battalion upon augmentation)

1 - General Support Artillery Battalion3 - Armored Cavalry Squadron3 - Scout Companies1 - Signal Battalion1 - Medical Company2 - Ranger BattalionsADDITIONAL RESOURCES REQUIRED

<u>STRUCTURE</u>	<u>INVESTMENT</u>	<u>ANNUAL RECURRING</u>
1 Direct Support Artillery Bn	\$2.7M	\$6.4M
1 General Support Artillery Bn	3.2	7.6
1 Signal Battalion (-) and elements of Logistic Battalion, Infantry Division	3.3	1.0
	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL COSTS	\$9.2M	\$15.0M

TOTAL \$24.2M

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Augmentation of RVNAF Logistics Capabilities

Although the Vietnamization Program has made improvements in the overall RVNAF logistical posture, internal management capabilities in the logistic area are marginal. The RVNAF capability to provide responsive logistic support to tactical operations is constrained by the shortage of logistic managers, lack of fully trained logistic units, and the inability of GVN to fill essential civilian logistic positions. Moreover, the RVNAF command structure, organized on an MR basis, hampers centralized control and direction for logistic matters.

With the expansion of logistic forces as part of the Consolidated RVNAF Improvement and Modernization Program, the RVNAF Logistic System should attain the planned level of limited self-sufficiency by the time, under the present planned program, that the last U.S. logistical support units redeploy in FY 73. Should U.S. withdrawals be accelerated, with U.S. forces being reduced to a MAAG by end FY 72, major modification of the current logistic Vietnamization Plan would be required. On-going programs with completion dates scheduled during FY 73 would have to be accelerated, or alternative means developed for their accomplishment.

Movement of RVNAF Units from MRs III and IV

The movement of units from MRs III and IV is a possibility, if and when the threat to these two important regions permits. The most likely type of redeployment would be on a temporary basis, for example MR 3 units could be temporarily moved to Binh Dinh during the wet season. Such moves have been made in the past, particularly by the JGS reserve forces (VNMC and airborne units). As the threat to MRs III and IV lessens, this deployment could be made more frequently.

Movement of combat units from one MR to another on a permanent basis is much more difficult. The attendant morale, dependent housing, and other associated problems which occurred in 1964 after movement of the ARVN 25th Division from MR II to MR III exemplify the problems associated with such moves. GVN decisions on whether to agree to either a temporary or permanent move will depend on such factors as seasonal weather, the effectiveness of FAN K, and the results of friendly operations in NE Cambodia and southern Laos to cut the enemy's LOC to MRs III and IV.

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Quality Improvement Variants

Across-the-board improvement in armament, communications, supporting equipment, improved operational capability within the constraints of existing organization and equipment, and improvements in general morale would enhance RVNAF force effectiveness.

The Improvement and Modernization (I&M) Program is providing equipment to the RVNAF ground forces in accordance with a schedule agreed to by MACV and JGS and based upon the RVNAF ability to use and maintain the equipment. Ground forces are being issued U.S. Army standard equipment. Although improvements in units not yet modernized are to be expected, major changes in the program for the regular ground forces would be difficult if not impossible to accelerate since it is based on the capability of the indigenous forces. Although material improvement could be made in the People's Self Defense Force (PSDF), mainly by arming the PSDF with M-16 rifles, the PSDF's adverse weapons lost to weapons captured ratio (.43:1) coupled with the innate GVN reluctance to arming the PSDF would seem to militate against this course of action.

Other specific equipment augmentation variants have not been considered.

Qualitative improvement might be stimulated by further improvement in leadership and personnel policies. In spite of notable improvement in effectiveness achieved in some divisions by new and more aggressive leadership, net desertion rates remain amazingly constant, although currently at the low side of their standard range of variation. Further improvement in leadership especially at the junior officer and NCO level is needed and being sought through training programs and improved promotion policies.

Some further improvement might also be achieved by revision of personnel policies and pay. A 10 percent pay raise would cost \$130 million. Considering the rate of inflation, such a raise would seem warranted. However, it would not be likely to influence desertion rates. In part, the desertion problem is technical -- caused

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by the 15 day absence rule, the reluctance of many commanders to grant extended leaves, and the difficulty of traveling (especially on schedule). Some further efforts might help in lowering the desertion rate such as the dependent shelter and food supplement program which are already underway.

Other special personnel measures could be considered such as a dislocation allowance for combat troops operating an extended distance from home bases, since there is evidence that such absences may be related to the cause or rate of desertions. Dislocation pay of this type could enhance performance and would ease the burden on the individual soldier operating in Laos, Cambodia, or in isolated areas of South Vietnam. While it might not measurably decrease desertions, it could still have a positive effect on performance. Dislocation pay would also be much more manageable in terms of its consequences for the general economy because it would be provided to a small fraction of the total RVNAF force.

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